



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

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Netherlands Antilles

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Country Report 2001

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Report Highlights:

U.S. exports of agricultural products to Aruba clear customs quickly and freely. At the present time, Aruba has no health regulations regarding imported foods. U.S. standards for food and agricultural products are accepted. Import licenses and permits are not required. The length of time for clearance depends on factors, such as, the number of container ships arriving at the same time, how quickly they are unloaded and when they are transported to the importer. Most containers are usually cleared after two days.

Includes PSD changes: No
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This report was prepared for the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Miami, Florida, for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate, either because policies have changed since its preparation or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities before any goods are shipped.

FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF THE PRODUCT ENTRY.

SECTION 1: FOOD LAWS

At the present time, there are no health regulations regarding imported foods. However, a Commodities Regulation for products destined for human consumption has been submitted to Parliament. To date, no action has been taken. Licenses or permits are not required to import food into Aruba. Agencies that receive, store and sell imported products must be registered with the Chamber of Commerce, membership in which is a government regulation. All imported meats must comply with USDA phytosanitary regulations. Any meat product from countries other than the United States that can pass USDA inspection are accepted in Aruba. A USDA meat inspection certificate with stamp is required. The Veterinary Department does random inspections.

SECTION II: LABELING REQUIREMENTS

Aruba has no labeling regulations. U.S. labels as well as labels from any other country are accepted. No additional information is required, such as expiration dates, nutritional or health claims.

SECTION III: PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS

Aruba has no regulations on packaging. Containers may not be over 40 feet.

SECTION IV: FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

According to the Health Department, the only additive forbidden is bromide which was banned when it was found in prepared bread dough from Puerto Rico. There are no further special requirements or restrictions. Authorities do not use the CODEX list.

SECTION V: PESTICIDES AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS

Aruba has no regulations regarding pesticides and other contaminants.

SECTION VI: OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Products are not required to be registered or laboratory tested at the time. Product samples shipped via express mail or parcel post are subject only to import regulations (i.e. customs duty). The addressee is responsible for the duty on sample and mail order shipments. Exporters should ensure that the addressee is informed of and agrees to accept the pending shipment to avoid it being returned at the cost of the exporter. Products are not monitored at the retail/wholesale level at this time. No import certification documents are required.

SECTION VII: OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS

Processed meat products with past due dates are now being confiscated and destroyed by the Veterinary Service. With the cooperation of the importers, other meats which are spoiled or in an unhealthy state are turned over to the service and destroyed. There are no quarantine laws for live animals. Health certificates from the state or local government agency of the exporting country must accompany the animals.

SECTION VIII: COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADEMARK LAWS

Aruba has no system to protect trademarks and brand names.

SECTION IX: IMPORTS PROCEDURES

Customs clearance is done by the importer or receiving agent who must be registered with Chamber of Commerce in order to do business in Aruba. Import documentation may be in English. After arrival at the port and shipments are approved (unopened), they are forwarded to the importer. Customs officers inspect the shipments on the premises where further documentation is presented. Duty is paid directly to the Department of Customs.

The length of time for the entire customs clearance procedure can vary widely. Perishable goods have priority and usually are cleared within one day. Dry goods can be cleared within two days. From mid-December to the end of the first week of January, customs handles only perishable goods. Customs does not work on holidays, after 5 p.m. or on weekends. The customs inspection is efficient and well-managed. The length of time for clearance depends on variable factors, such as, the number of container ships arriving at the same time, how quickly can they be unloaded and when they are transported to the importer.

There is no “official” appeals system for disputed and/or rejected products. Disputes are handled on a case by case basis.

APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

FOR CUSTOMS PROCEDURES AND TARIFFS, CONTACT:

MR. ADDISON CROES

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